

Delight your loved ones with a customised Christmas Gift Box this festive season, made with love by individuals with special needs

Selangor Dredging Berhad (SDB) is renowned for creating impact towards greater social change through extensive corporate social responsibility initiatives. Various programmes have been introduced since 2011 and its latest one is the Christmas Gift Boxes created by individuals with special needs to spread some festive cheer to fellow Malaysians.

SDB's corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach goes beyond merely making donations. All CSR programmes are also deeply aligned with the company's mission of 'Driving Excellence, Building Lifelong Relationships' – including individuals with special needs.

The **Department of Statistic Malaysia** revealed that, in year 2017, person with disabilities (PWD) registered with the Department of Social Welfare were 453,258 persons. The number has been tremendously increasing ever since and approximately 15% of Malaysian population are categorised under persons with disabilities as stated earlier this year by Senator Ras Adiba Radzi who is also the President of Sentral OKU (Orang Kurang Upaya or known as People with Disabilities).

Escalating numbers of these special needs individuals further encourage SDB to create diversified employment opportunities through various programmes such as One-Two-Juice, One-Two-Wash, One-Two-Gift and One-Two-Boost.

One-Two-Juice was launched back in 2011 to empower and support individuals with disabilities to lead normal independent lives. The fruit juice stall is operated by young adults with disabilities at the courtyard area of Wisma Golden Eagle Realty. Through this effort, they were able to earn salary independently by preparing juices, taking and delivering orders and manning the juice stalls. Subsequently, One-Two-Juice was awarded the Asia Responsible Entrepreneurship Award under the Social Empowerment Category in 2012 and 2014, emerging as one of the top CSR initiatives in the Asian region.

Following the success of One-Two-Juice, One-Two-Wash was introduced in 2014 to create more employment opportunities and cater for individuals with special needs. The car wash initiative was implemented with specially designed processes and learning tools to assist these individuals to learn and follow through better. The operation of One-Two-Wash was also located at Wisma Golden Eagle Realty, which cater to office tenants as well as patrons from the neighbouring office buildings.

Last year, the One-Two-Gift handcrafted naturally-made soaps project was introduced. The soaps are made from shea butter and essential oils to soothe and nourish the skin.

Earlier this year, the company had launched One-Two-Boost to create special prescribed herbal drinks and soup packs to boost one's overall immunity and well-being, all single-handedly prepared and packed by young adults with disabilities under proper supervision. Currently, the Immune-Booster series features soups, tea and drink packs to boost one's overall immunity. The Nourishing Series consist of the warm and cold bazhen soup which is suitable for males and females and is known to increase energy and blood circulation. To increase the body's metabolic rate, the Fat Loss tea is suitable to be consumed daily and combined with a proper diet and exercise regime to see results.

The Christmas Gift Boxes activity dovetails the One-Two-Gifts and One-Two-Boost initiatives with the aim of bringing cheer during the festive season.

Case in point is the customised Christmas Gift Box containing two teabags of calming tea, immune booster teabags and a hand-crafted anti-epidemic snowflake-shaped soap. Also available for purchase is the Customised Gift Box containing nine pieces of soaps with different shapes and fragrances.

The ultimate objective of these programmes is for these individuals to acquire sufficient living skills that will enable them to be economically independent so that they gain the dignity and self-confidence to lead more fulfilling adult lives.

"An entrepreneur's first obligation is to meet the expectations of its main stakeholders, customers, shareholders, and the community at large. More than just ensuring that our operations do not cause harm to the environment and community, it is also our obligation to ensure that community and environment continue to thrive. Profits are no longer the only consideration for an entrepreneur. We must be able to play our part in helping to make the world a better place," said Teh Lip Kim, Group Managing Director of Selangor Dredging Berhad.

"They are assessed on a regular basis to determine their level of capabilities in various areas, and we have found that many of those who have participated in this programme have shown marked improvement. Once they're developed, we encourage them to move on and take up bigger challenges SDB employs person with disabilities in various departments and functions, such as Human Resources, Office Administration and Sales Administration, Finance; or they can even venture to their own business."

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